

Flat Iron Building
1-3 Genesee Street
Auburn
Cayuga County
New York

HABS No. NY-5702

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NY
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PHOTOCRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FLAT IRON BUILDING

HABS No. NY-5702

HABS
NY
6 - 11/10/73
8 -

Location: 1-3 Genesee Street.

Present Owner: Demolished, summer 1974.

Present Occupant: Demolished, summer 1974.

Significance: This building illustrates an innovative solution to the problem of placing a commercial structure on a triangular plot. The site was occupied by the "Center House", a popular tavern from 1805-1929, when Ezekial Williams, prominent among the early developers of Auburn had this commercial block, the first constructed of stone in the village, erected.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c.1829.
2. Architect: Ezekial Williams, Builder.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

Following are excerpts from the Abstracts of Title on file in the Cayuga County Clerk's Office:

First Deed Records:

- 1849 - George F. Leitch to William M. Ostrander and Chester Moses. Two brick stores with cut stone fronts and lots thereto in the said State of New York, in County of Cayuga, in the City of Auburn at the junction of Center Street and Genesee Street in said City.
- 1850 - Cayuga County Bank against Doratus Kellogg and George F. Leitch to Joseph P. Swift, Sheriff of Cayuga County to be sold at Public Auction.
- 1852 - (May 18) Joseph P. Swift, Sheriff of Cayuga County to Isaac Selover, two stores Nos. 1 and 3 Genesee Street.
- 1873 - (March 1) Susan Selover, Executrix, to Henry B. Perry, premises conveyed Store No. 3. Susan Selover, Executrix, to Charles Patten, premises conveyed, Store No. 1.

3 Genesee Street as follows:

- 1889 - (April 26) Henry B. Perry and Emily M. to John D. Forman, Saloon.
- 1892 - (September 15) John D. Forman and Carrie to Henry B. Perry, Saloon.
- 1900 - (March 20) Leased to Matthew Emperor and Patrick Emperor for 5 years by Mr. H. B. Perry and Nellie Perry, saloon.
- 1903 - (September 30) Leased by Perry's to C. August Koenig to commence May 1, 1905. Renewal every 5 years to 1917, saloon.
- 1920 - (May 28) Ellen Perry Miller to Israel Goldman and Bella.
- 1923 - (March 30) Israel Goldman and Bella to Dennis Collins and Julia Collins, saloon.
- 1958 - (April 18) Edward T. Boyle as Executor, to Howard F. Clark and M. Helene Clark. Subsequent transactions were between Howard F. Clark and his wife. Present owner is Howard F. Clark, Jr.

1 Genesee Street as follows:

- 1904 - (April 20) Charles Patten and Mary J. to D. Edwin French. Vacant.
- 1904 - (August 31) D. Edwin French and Sarah M. to Edwin C. Burtis, drug store.
- 1906 - to 1914 saloon
- 1914 - (October 6) D. Edwin French and Sarah M. to Edwin C. Burtis, Quit Claim Deed to correct former Deed 1904.
- 1918 - (September 26) John N. Ross as Executor to Barnabas A. Dean.
- 1918 - 1922 Grocery store.
- 1918 - to date coal office, offices, various retail stores.

1948 - (June 3) Jennie E. Dean, individually and Warren H. Royal B. Dean and Estella Dean Finn as Executors to Carmelo Siracusa and Margherita.

All subsequent transactions between members of the Siracusa family.

4. Original plans and construction: This building was constructed on the site of the former Center House Tavern, also known as Horner's Tavern. This tavern occupied the site from 1805-1829 when it was moved in order that Center St. and the Seneca Turnpike could be widened.
5. Historical Context:

The Flat Iron Building was constructed by Ezekial Williams, c.1829. No. 1 Genesee St. was used as a drug store until 1869, when a music store is listed for that address. In 1873, it was sold and became a meat market until 1904, when it was again sold. The structure was always used as a retail outlet by various businesses including two different tailor shops. It became a realty office in December of 1969.

No. 3 Genesee St. was originally used as a saloon. Records indicate that it remained as a saloon until 1956. It was vacant for several years until in 1962 it became the office of the Auburn Pennysaver, an advertising newspaper, which occupied the building until demolition in 1974.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A commercial building, notable among the few survivors of its type in the central New York area, from the early days of settlement, for its distinguished character, harmonious proportions, simple elements, refined details and skilled craftsmanship.
2. Condition of fabric: Demolished, summer 1974.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Triangular plan with rounded apex. Approximate dimensions: 50 feet (length of base of the triangle, along the west side) by 44' 9" (front west side to the rounded end).
2. Foundations: Foundation walls are limestone, terminating at the grade level.

3. Wall construction: Walls are carefully dressed limestone ashlar laid in regular courses about ten inches high, with narrow mortar joints.
4. Openings:
 - a. Windows: Window openings have stone lintels and sills. Simple wooden casings are recessed. Sashes are double hung, apparently replacements, some with older 6/6 glazing, but mostly now 1/1 glazing. There are six bays on the south, seven bays on the north and four bays on the rounded eastern end.
5. Roof: The roof is low in pitch, apparently covered with sheet metal. It is a combination of a gabled and a conical form. The gable abuts a higher party wall at the west side. A wooden cornice crowns the exterior walls.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The plan is divided into two portions: 1) The western, which is three bays wide, extending through from the south wall to the north wall; 2) the eastern, which includes the rounded corner.
2. Stairways: The stairs do not appear to be original; they are enclosed.
3. Heating: The original heating was probably fireplaces.

- D. Site: The site is a triangle formed by the intersection of Genesee and Market Sts., at an angle of approximately 41 degrees, at the eastern end of the block thus formed. It has always been a conspicuous location, being visible for some distance from the east, from Genesee St., which bends at this point. The building fills the site, except for being rounded at the apex.

Prepared by:
Auburn Urban Renewal Agency
24 South St.
Auburn, New York 13021
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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Auburn Directory
1st Edition - 1857

Gazetteer of the State of New York, Albany, New York, 1842

B. Secondary and published sources:

Hall, Henry. The History of Auburn. Dennis Brothers & Co.,
Publishers, 1869.

Monroe, Joel H. Historical Records of a Hundred and Twenty Years.
New York: W. H. Humphrey, Publisher, 1913.

Starke, Elliot S. The History of Cayuga County. Syracuse, New
York: D. Mason and Co., 1879.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This structure was recorded by the Auburn Renewal Agency in compliance
with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory
Council on Historic Preservation.